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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1196
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RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAHLA/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASH DC IMMEDIATE
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001231

SIPDIS

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR WILLIAMS/GREENE/WAECHTER;
NEA/RA FOR LAWSON; OES FOR DALEYNSC FOR ABRAMS, DORAN,
MUSTAFA; STATE PASS TO USAID/BORODIN; STATE PASS TO USDA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFLU](#) [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: AI SITREP MARCH 27: CULLING BEGINS IN GAZA; ISRAEL
OUTBREAK CONTAINED FOR NOW

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1206

- [1B.](#) JERUSALEM 1192
- [1C.](#) JERUSALEM 1177
- [1D.](#) JERUSALEM 1151
- [1E.](#) TEL AVIV 1135
- [1F.](#) TEL AVIV 1087

This is a joint cable from Consulate General Jerusalem and
Embassy Tel Aviv.

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary: The WHO and the PA reported that
preparations for culling had begun and that infected flocks
in Rafah and Jahr el-Deik began to be culled March 27. The
PA has promised compensation for Gaza farmers with infected
flocks. The Israeli labs returned negative test results for
two farms in Gaza and three in the West Bank. The PA
Ministry of Health reported that it had received adequate
doses of Tamiflu from the GOI and UNICEF. The GOI announced
that it had completed the culling of 1.2 million birds in
Israel, in nine days ending March 27. End Summary.

Palestinian farmers agree to cull their flocks

[12.](#) (SBU) WHO Representative Mahmud Daher reported March 27
that the two-part culling process had begun in Gaza with
instructions to farmers with infected flocks to dehydrate the
birds to prepare them to drink poisoned water. (Note: He
added that the GOI had provided the PA with the necessary
poison. End Note.) Both Daher and PA Gaza Director of
Control and Quarantine Said Siyam said culling would begin
March 27 with the elimination of 13,000 egg-layers in Rafah
using poisoned drinking water. The Gaza Farmers Council had
given the Jahr el-Deik farmers instructions to begin the
dehydration process to prepare for the culling of their flock
of 35,000. In the interim, the area continued to be under
strict quarantine, Siyam noted. The decision to move forward
with culling was the result of a March 26 meeting with
representatives from the WHO, FAO, UNRWA, the Gaza Governor,
and the head of the Gaza Farmers' Council, during which Gazan
farmers agreed to cull their infected flocks in exchange for
forthcoming compensation. (Note: Daher said the farmers
will receive between USD 7 and 10 per broiler chicken and USD
15 and 20 per chicken. End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) Daher confirmed that samples from Beit Lahia (north of Gaza city) and el-Musaddar (near Deir el-Balah), submitted to the GOI for testing after suspicious deaths of poultry, had come back negative for H5N1.

¶4. (SBU) World Bank Country Director David Craig reported that the World Bank could reallocate USD 2 million to fund an AI compensation program for Palestinian farmers. The reallocations will need World Bank Executive Board approval, but Craig noted that the PA could borrow from a commercial bank against this pledge. Craig said Deputy Finance Minister Jihad al-Wazir is calling for the EU to release its last tranche of funding (about USD 21 million) from the World Bank Reform Trust Fund for emergency AI compensation and containment efforts. Craig believes the World Bank could disburse the money, if instructed by the EU, but that the fastest way to move funds would be for the GOI to unfreeze a portion of PA clearance revenue after Israeli elections and disburse it to UNRWA, the only UN agency that has indicated an ability and willingness to implement an emergency AI program, in concert with WHO and FAO.

PA receives Tamiflu; no human cases reported

¶5. (SBU) Daher confirmed that the PA had received 300 doses of Tamiflu from the GOI and that UNICEF had purchased another 900 doses from the local market for distribution in the West Bank and Gaza, should there be a human outbreak. (Note: There have been no confirmed cases of humans contracting the AI virus in the West Bank or Gaza. End Note.) Deputy Health Minister Anan Masri said the PA had met its present Tamiflu needs but it may need additional doses in the future. Masri reported that the PA Ministry of Health staff in Gaza had met

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with their Israeli counterparts March 26 at the Erez crossing to discuss their needs, which include equipment to protect healthcare workers dealing with potential human cases if the virus should spread.

Negative results for AI suspected cases in the West Bank

¶6. (SBU) In the West Bank, PA West Bank Director of Veterinary Services Imad Mukarkar said samples from three farms, including the 5,000 egglayer farm in el-Bekiah, the 9,000 broiler farm in Jericho, and samples sent from a broiler farm in Nablus, had all tested negative, according to the Israeli lab. He confirmed that the only positive case of H5N1 in the West Bank was in the Israeli settlement of Beka'ot. He maintained that all farms would continue to be closely monitored.

GOI completes culling, assesses damages

¶7. (SBU) A March 26 statement by the Israeli Agriculture Ministry expressed concern that Israel could experience a new outbreak of H5N1, given the presence of the disease in Jordan, Egypt and Gaza. Israel culled 1.2 million birds at 53 coops in 14 communities in nine days, ending March 27, thereby controlling its outbreak at present. The Israeli MOA statement compared Israel's response favorably to those of other countries, noting inter alia that Japan took 23 days to cull at one location and 31 days at another. The MOA has assessed "direct damages" at NIS 24 million (USD 5.2 million), and is in the process of calculating indirect costs. (Note: Current GOI MA estimates of direct costs are for compensation for farmers in the poultry sector, of which NIS 2 million (USD 2.6 million) was paid out the week of March 20. Indirect costs are estimated at NIS 45 million (USD 9.8 million) and do not/not include the costs to the GOI of controlling the AI outbreak, the cost of assistance to the PA, or other impacts on the economy. Estimates for those additional costs should emerge in the coming days, but GOI

officials are reluctant to focus on these calculations due to
concern of future possible outbreaks of AI. End Note.)
WALLES